

MISCELLANEOUS.

The late GEORGE ROBERT GRAY.

SINCE our last publication, zoology, and ornithology in particular, has sustained a severe loss by the death of George Robert Gray, Assistant Keeper of Zoology in the British Museum, whom we have no hesitation in pronouncing one of the most distinguished ornithologists of the present day. He was the youngest son of Samuel Frederick Gray, himself a distinguished chemist, pharmacologist, and naturalist, and brother of Dr. John Edward Gray, the present Head Keeper of the Department of Zoology in the British Museum, so well known and so eminently famed for his numerous zoological and other labours. Born in July 1808, he was educated at Merchant Tailors' School, in the City of London, and early in life assisted the late Mr. Children in the arrangement of his extensive collection of insects. In this congenial occupation he spent several years, until 1831, when he became an Assistant in the Zoological Department of the British Museum, of which Mr. Children was the Keeper. He contributed greatly to the enlarged translation of Cuvier's 'Animal Kingdom,' then in progress under the charge of Mr. Griffith, and published various works on insects, the chief of which was a revision of the Phasmidæ—and at a later period gave to the world a revision of some of the divisions of the Linnean genus *Papilio*, and an account of insects parasitical on other insects and on plants, most elaborately worked out. In 1840 he printed privately a 'List of the Genera of Birds,' containing 1065 genera, and noting the type species on which each genus was founded; and in the following year he published a second edition with additions and corrections, in which he extended the list to 1232 genera. The third edition of this work, entitled a 'List of the Genera and Subgenera of Birds,' contains 2403 genera and subgenera. The last of this set of "Lists" was a 'Hand-list of the Genera and Species of Birds,' containing not only the generic and subgeneric names, but also a comprehensive list of the species belonging to each. Of these works it may be sufficient to say that they were elaborated with the utmost care, that they are almost unequalled for the accuracy of their details, and that no ornithologist can possibly work without constant reference to them and to the authorities on which they are founded and to which they refer.

In 1844 he commenced, in connexion with the late David William Mitchell, who undertook the illustration of the book, the publication in numbers of a work entitled 'The Genera of Birds,' which he completed in 1849. In this work the genera figured amounted to about 800, selected from the larger list contained in his other works as the most essential, and they were accompanied by descriptive characters and by an extensive list of species belonging to each genus. It was on this list that the much more enlarged catalogue contained in his 'Hand-list' was chiefly founded, containing upwards of 11,000 species which the author considers authentic, and no less than 40,000 references to specific names given by various authors.

In all these works, which are of such essential value to writers on ornithology, it is difficult to overestimate the labour, the accuracy, and the importance attached to their compilation. The author was indefatigable in his researches, and spared no pains in searching out all that had been done in ornithology from every available source; and his success was in most respects commensurate with his labours. His chief fault lay not in an overweening confidence in his own conclusions (for he was always most ready to avail himself of any suggestions or corrections that were made to him), but in an over-sensitiveness which made him impatient of criticisms which he considered carping, or of suggestions made without due consideration on points which he had himself studied with the utmost attention.

In his official capacity he was always most ready to attend to and assist the numerous students who visited the Museum, and to give them whatever information he possessed on the subjects on which they were engaged; and many of our leading ornithologists will readily admit that they owe much to his kind assistance and advice. In private life he was equally kind-hearted and liberal, with somewhat of the same over-sensitiveness to which we have above referred as distinctive of his scientific character. But a truer-hearted and a better friend has seldom existed; and there are many, both in public and private, who will sincerely deplore his loss. He died on the 6th of May, in the 64th year of his age, leaving a blank in the world of science which will not readily be filled up. He became a Fellow of the Linnean Society in 1845, and of the Royal in 1866.

Jukella, a new Aleyonarian from Sir C. Hardy's Island.

By Dr. J. E. GRAY, F.R.S. &c.

JUKELLA.

Coral hard, fleshy, forming a thick, smooth, barren stem, marked by irregular longitudinal grooves or ridges; divided at the top into irregular transverse foliaceous expansions, sinuated or lobed on the margins, which are covered with close retractile polypes on each of their sides. All parts of the coral studded with calcareous cylindrical spicules, which have four more or less large, prominent, separate, transverse plates, which are largest in the middle and more or less small or rudimentary at the ends.



Jukella cristata.

Hab. Sir C. Hardy's Island, South Pacific. Presented by J. B. Jukes, Esq. Brit. Mus.

Attached to a shell and part of a rock. The stem is about four inches high; and the crests, of very irregular form and size, are nearly parallel to each other, as if placed across the fleshy stem.